



## POSTER PRESENTATION

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# Eight years of experience with biological treatment in juvenile idiopathic arthritis

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## Introduction

The introduction of biological agents has provided a new therapeutic approach to the treatment of juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA).

## Aim

To analyze the data from a eight year follow-up of JIA patients treated with biological agents.

## Methods

Patients with JIA who started a biological treatment were enrolled in a prospective observational study. Clinical and laboratory data were recorded at baseline and every 3 months.

## Results

24 patients, 54% female, mean age at disease onset  $7 \pm 4$  years, mean disease duration  $11 \pm 8$  years. 25% had systemic arthritis, 25% rheumatoid factor (RF) positive polyarthritis, 17% RF negative polyarthritis, 12% enthesitis-related arthritis, and the remaining 21% were equally distributed across the other groups. All patients had been previously treated with at least one DMARD. The indication for biological treatment was DMARD failure in 86% of the cases and MTX toxicity in the remaining 14%.

Biological treatment was started at a mean age of  $15 \pm 7$  years and maintained for a mean of three years (2 months- 7 years). 20 patients received etanercept, 3 infliximab and 1 anakinra as first-line biological. All patients experienced a significant reduction in all disease activity parameters at 3 months with maximum improvement at six months (reduction in active joint count of 92%, joints with limited range of motion 81%,

VAS 35%, ESR of 61%, CRP 88% ( $p < 0.05$ )). This response was sustained up to 7 years of treatment in 75% of the patients. The remaining 25% switched to a second biological due to loss of efficacy.

## Conclusion

Biological treatment was an effective and safe therapeutic option in this cohort of patients with severe JIA refractory or intolerant to classic DMARDs.

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